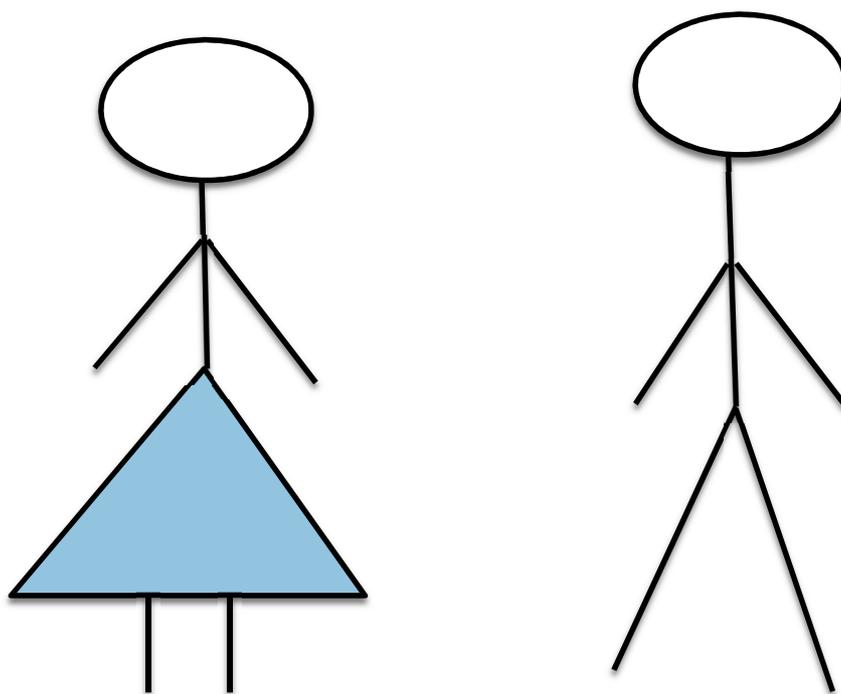


Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Ireland

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY



Watch lovingly over the opening minds and spiritual growth of your children, appreciating their desire for knowledge and maintaining a caring interest in their activities and use of leisure time.....Finally dear Friends, let your whole life be worthy of a disciple of Christ, living in a right relationship with God and your neighbor.

From General Christian Counsel (as revised in 1981)

This is a policy document of Ireland Yearly Meeting which is to be implemented within the Society across the whole island of Ireland. However, it should be noted that there are a number of differences in legislation and government policy with regard to child protection and welfare across the two jurisdictions. In order to facilitate clear understanding the contents are presented as follows:

- Information that applies to ROI only is in a grey shaded box
- Information that applies to NI only is in a yellow shaded box
- Information outside a box is relevant to the full Yearly Meeting.

This document includes our Declaration of Guiding Principles and Child Safeguarding Statement. It also includes a range of procedures, protocols and guidelines which will assist in the implementation of the policy within the Society – these can be found in the Appendices in Section10.

Whether children or young people are mentioned throughout this document, both are intended.

The term Meeting refers to Preparative Meetings, Recognised, Allowed Meetings and Worship Groups.

This policy document is available in printed format in Meeting Houses and in soft copy at <https://quakers-in-ireland.ie/>

Acknowledgements

Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the churches and agencies whose policies and guidelines have been used as reference and source material.

We would also like to acknowledge the many Friends, including previous Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee members, who contributed to the development of the policy.

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Introduction

The recognition of the value of every human being, regardless of age, has always been central to The Religious Society of Friends. It is based in our belief that there is “the light of Christ” or “that of God” to be found in every person. This has led to an emphasis on dignity and respect for all, both young and old. Bearing in mind the importance Jesus placed on children and the love of God for them, Friends are conscious of the privilege and responsibility of caring for and ensuring the well-being of the children and young people in our Society.

It is the earnest desire of Friends throughout Ireland that our children should develop to their full potential personally, spiritually and in every other aspect. This needs to happen in a safe and caring environment and Ireland Yearly Meeting acknowledges its responsibility to provide suitable care for children and young people.

Legislative changes in the south of Ireland require organisations to develop and implement more comprehensive child safeguarding measures than previously existed. The Religious Society of Friends is a single entity that functions throughout the island of Ireland; however, it is recognised that as an organisation we are legally bound to two jurisdictions which use different terminology and have different requirements regarding child safeguarding. Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee was tasked with revising the Society’s existing Child Protection Guidelines so as to ensure they meet current legislative and statutory policy requirements. **This policy document replaces all current child protection and welfare guidelines/policies in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.** The document was written based on the clear guidance provided and stated requirements of Tusla (Child and Family Agency in the Republic of Ireland) and the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland. Differences between jurisdictions are clearly indicated throughout the document.

The policy document has been written to guide and support Meetings, committees and all adults who work and volunteer with children. It includes as required our *Declaration of Guiding Principles for Safeguarding Children* as well as our *Child Safeguarding Statement*. Its main aim is to ensure the promotion of a child-centred ethos, to encourage consistency in our interactions with children and to provide guidance and on what to do when a concern about possible abuse arises. This will not only help protect our children and young people but will also provide support and encouragement to the many Friends who give generously of their time to volunteer with children.

Each Meeting, committee or group of Friends who organise activities for children and young people are required to be familiar with and discharge their specific responsibilities as outlined in the policy. It is most important that these responsibilities are acted upon and reviewed regularly. Failure to do this may place children at risk and open the Society to justified criticism as well as potential legal action.

Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee has been given the responsibility to oversee the implementation of this policy and to seek compliance with it among Friends. In addition, the committee will offer what support and advice it can to Meetings, committees and individuals. The Clerk of Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee can be contacted through the administrative office of Ireland Yearly Meeting at:

Address: Quaker House, Stocking Lane, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16. Eir Code D16 V3F8

Telephone: (01) 4998003, or from Northern Ireland 00353 (1) 4998003.

Or by **Email:** iymec@quakers.ie

SECTION 1: Terminology used in this document

The Religious Society of Friends in Ireland is an all island body and may be referred to in this document as 'the Society', 'Quakers' or 'Friends'.

NI is Northern Ireland and **RoI** is the Republic of Ireland.

An Garda Siochana is the police force in the Republic of Ireland.

PSNI is the police force in Northern Ireland.

A child is a person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married.

Child protection consists of the work of recognising, responding to and reporting concerns that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

Child safeguarding is more than child protection and refers to actions and measures taken to create and maintain safe environments for children.

A **Designated Liaison Person** (DLP) is well grounded in the Society's child safeguarding policy and guidance. He/she acts as a resource for Meetings and groups; is responsible for ensuring that our reporting procedures are followed correctly; acts as a liaison with other agencies; and supports the Mandated Person in their reporting responsibilities to Tusla.

GDPR stands for **General Data Protection Regulation** which prescribes how personal data should be treated.

Harm refers to assault, ill-treatment, sexual abuse or neglect of a child (See further definition in NI box below)

Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT) are the publicly funded services which provide public health and other social care services and are the main contacts for safeguarding in Northern Ireland. The **Gateway Single Point of Entry** is the contact point for making queries/referrals.

IYMEC is Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee which has overarching responsibility within the Society for the protection and welfare of children.

A **Leader** is any adult who volunteers to work with children within the religious Society of Friends. The term refers to Youth Club Leaders, Junior Yearly Meeting Organisers and Helpers, Moyallon Camp Leaders, those who assist in Sunday School/Junior Meeting or others involved in helping out at organised events.

A **Mandated Person** has a legal responsibility to report to Tusla if a child is being harmed, has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of reports, where requested to do so. Within Friends this role is undertaken by our Youth Coordinator.

The **Named Person** is appointed to lead the development of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures and for ensuring that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice. Within Friends this is the Clerk of Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee.

The **Relevant Person** is the first point of contact in respect of the Society's Child Safeguarding Statement, and within Friends is the Clerk of Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee

The **Safeguarding Representative** raises awareness and informs Preparative Meetings, Worship Groups and Allowed Meetings about child safeguarding. He/she promotes best practice and compliance with the Society's child safeguarding policy.

The **SBNI** is the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland. Its role is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland by coordinating the work and ensuring the effectiveness of each person or body represented on the Board.

Tusla is the Child and Family Agency which is the lead statutory organisation for safeguarding children in the Republic of Ireland.

UNOCINI stands for Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland. Its role is to ensure better assessment and planning to meet the needs of children and families.

NORTHERN IRELAND

SBNI guidance also provides the following definitions

Harm is defined in the Children Order as ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development. The Order states that 'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse, forms of ill-treatment which are physical and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical; 'health' means physical or mental health; and 'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

A **Child/Young Person in Need of Protection** is a child/young person who is at risk of, or likely to suffer, significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm as defined in Article 50 of the Children Order.

SECTION 2: Declaration of Guiding Principles for Safeguarding Children

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

This Declaration of Guiding Principles for Safeguarding Children should be printed and displayed in every Meeting House. It should also be communicated to parents/guardians, children and young people, those who engage in Sunday School/Junior Meeting, Elders and Overseers and adults who organise events as well as any employees of the Society. See Appendix 10.1 for printable version

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Ireland Declaration of Guiding Principles for Safeguarding Children

The Religious Society of Friends in Ireland organises Sunday School, Junior Meetings for Worship, residential camps, pilgrimages, youth clubs and other social events for children. These are organised at local, regional and national levels. The purpose of these gatherings is to provide for the spiritual, personal and social growth of children who come among us.

We believe that:

1. Our priority to ensure the welfare and safety of every child and young person who comes among us is paramount.
2. Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and these will be reviewed every two years or as appropriate.
3. All children and young people have an equal right to be respected as individuals and to be encouraged to reach their potential, regardless of their background.
4. We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, to be listened to and be heard.
5. Our guiding principles apply to everyone in our Society.
6. Employees/volunteers must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our Society.

The Safeguarding Representative/s appointed by this Meeting is/are

..... who can be contacted at

..... who can be contacted at

The **Designated Liaison Person** appointed by Ireland Yearly Meeting to support this Preparative Meeting is the Youth Coordinator who can be contacted at iym.youth@outlook.com

The **deputy Designated Liaison Person** is Sheilagh Reaper-Reynolds who can be contacted at iymec@quakers.ie or through Quaker House at 01 4998003 or from Northern Ireland at 00353 (1) 4998003

The **Mandated Person** within the Religious Society of Friends is the Youth Coordinator who can be contacted at iym.youth@outlook.com

SECTION 3: Child Safeguarding Statement

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND ONLY

This Safeguarding Statement should be printed and displayed in every Meeting House. It should also be communicated to parents/guardians, children and young people, those who engage in Sunday School/Junior Meeting, Elders and Overseers and adults who organise events as well as any employees of the Society.

See Appendix 10.2 for printable version

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Ireland Child Safe Guarding Statement

It is the earnest desire of Friends that children should be supported to develop to their full potential in a positive, safe and caring environment. We will endeavour to do this by choosing carefully the adults who work with children and by ensuring that they behave appropriately towards them; by communicating and engaging appropriately with children and their parents; and by taking appropriate action as required when concerns arise.

We have carried out an assessment of any potential harm* to establish whether any of our practices have the potential to put children at risk. Below is a list of the risks identified and how we manage these risks.

	Risk Identified	Actions in place to manage identified risk
1	A child could be exposed, through their involvement in activities provided by the Society, to people who may harm them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Society's Child Safeguarding Policy is circulated widely and is implemented. Local compliance is reported on, on an annual basis. • Safeguarding Representatives are appointed by each Preparative Meeting. • A leader / volunteer application and approval process is in place. • Leaders / volunteers are vetted / police checked. • Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee holds a list of approved and vetted volunteer leaders.
2	Concerns that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected may go undetected and unreported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This statement, along with the Declaration of Guiding Principles and our Child Safeguarding Policy is circulated to Preparative Meetings and committees responsible for children. • Safeguarding Representatives, DLPs, the Mandated Person and others within Meetings who volunteer with children are required and supported to avail of training.
3	Lack of clarity as to who is responsible for what when it comes to child safeguarding and protection in the Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Child Safeguarding Policy clearly describes the roles and responsibilities of Meetings and individuals within the Society including Safeguarding Representatives, Designated Liaison Persons, the Mandated Person, Named Person and Relevant Person. • The role of Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee in terms of policy development, implementation and compliance is described in the policy. • Information and training is made available to workers, leaders/volunteers.

4	Safeguarding measures / good practice may not be implemented in Preparative Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Representatives are appointed by each Preparative Meeting. • Each Preparative Meeting is required to submit to Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee an annual Child Safeguarding Report including what measures have been put in place in the Meeting and if any concerns have arisen during the year.
5	The Mandated Person may not be aware of his/her responsibilities under the Children First Act 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Role of the Mandated Person is clearly described in our Child Safeguarding Policy document. • Changes in legislation, national guidelines, or other relevant policies / information is made available to the Mandated Person. • Training and information is provided.

*It should be noted that harm/risk in this context is the risk of abuse and not general health and safety harm/risk.

Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017), and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*.

In addition to the actions listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are involved in activities within the Society and are available in Section 10.

- a) Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children;
- b) Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm;
- c) Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of an activity provided by the Society;
- d) Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla;
- e) Procedure for appointing and maintaining a list of the following roles within the Society: Relevant Person, Mandated Person, Designated Liaison Person, and Safeguarding Representative.

Information on these procedures is included in our *Child Safeguarding Policy - Declaration of Guiding Principles, Child Safeguarding Statement, Procedures and Good Practice Guidance* (2018) available at <https://quakers-in-ireland.ie/> or on request from Quaker House Dublin office@quakers-in-ireland.ie

Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. The Religious Society of Friends is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed in 2021, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Confidentiality

Where a concern arises for the protection and welfare of a child information must be shared on a 'need to know' basis only. No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given.

For queries please contact the Relevant Person named below at iymec@quakers.ie

Signed: Sheilagh Reaper-Reynolds
Relevant Person /Clerk of Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee

SECTION 4: Key safeguarding roles within the Society

This section includes information on

- **Key roles** within the Society;
- How people are **appointed** into these roles;
- An outline of the **responsibilities** attached to these roles.

The legal requirement to appoint specific roles differs in the jurisdictions of NI and ROI differ and this is clearly indicated below.

The contact details for Friends appointed to these roles are available through Meetings or from office@quakers-in-ireland.ie

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Mandated Person

The Society's appointed **Youth Coordinator** acts as the Mandated Person within the Religious Society of Friends.

The Mandated Person is **required by law to report to Tusla**, the Child and Family Agency, where he or she: "*knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is being harmed, has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed*". Mandated persons also have a statutory obligation to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, when requested to do so.

The Mandated Persons may make joint reports with a DLP, however, a Mandated Person **cannot discharge their legal responsibility to report by reporting to another person** (e.g. by reporting to their DLP). Please see Section 5.3 for further guidance on the role and responsibilities of the Mandated Person to report child protection concerns.

Relevant Person

As a provider of a relevant service under the Children First Act 2015 the Society is required to appoint a Relevant Person. The Relevant Person is the **first point of contact within the Society** in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement. Within Ireland Yearly Meeting the **Clerk of IYMEC** is appointed to act in this capacity

Named Person

National guidelines advise organisations to appoint a Named Person who has overarching **responsibility for the development of specific policies and procedures** that will help create a safe and nurturing environment for children and young people. Within Friends the **Clerk of IYMEC** is asked to undertake this role.

Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person – NI and ROI

The Youth Co-ordinator will hold the role of DLP. The role of the deputy Designated Liaison Person is to provide support to the DLP and to act in his/her absence. Ideally the role of deputy DLP will be undertaken by the Clerk of IYM Education Committee; however, if this is not possible IYM Nominations Committee will seek to appoint another Friend to undertake the role of deputy. The DLP and deputy are **required to undertake training in child protection and welfare**.

The aim of the DLP is two-fold

1. To **act as a resource** providing information, advice and support on child safeguarding to Meetings, Safeguarding Representatives, event organisers/leaders or to Friends who have a child protection concern. This includes:
 - a. Having a thorough knowledge of the Society's policy, guiding principles and duties in relation to child safeguarding procedures.
 - b. Helping Friends to identify and to advise on training needs.

2. To **ensure that the Society's child protection reporting procedures are followed** so that any child protection and welfare concerns are referred promptly to Tusla/HSC Trust. Specific duties on the identification, recording and reporting of concerns is included in Section 5 and Appendices 10.15, 10.16, and 10.17

The name and contact details of the DLP and deputy DLP should be **posted on the noticeboard** in each meeting house (Appendix 10.24). In the case of an organised event the leaders should ensure that they are aware of the names and contact details of the DLP and deputy.

Within the Society the roles of Mandated Person and Designated Liaison Person are combined and are included within the job description of the Youth Coordinator. The deputy Designated Liaison person is the Clerk of Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee.

Safeguarding Representatives – NI and ROI

A Safeguarding Representative and deputy Safeguarding Representative should be **appointed by each Meeting**, and preferably for a period of three years.

The role of a Safeguarding Representative is to:

- **Raise awareness** on child safeguarding within their Preparative Meeting;
- **Promote best practice and compliance** with the Society's child safeguarding policy;
- Ensure Sunday School / Junior Meeting **volunteers are appointed and vetted as appropriate** (Appendix 10.4)
- Ensure adult volunteers within their Preparative Meeting **understand their responsibilities** in relation to child safeguarding;
- Ensure the Society's ***Declaration of Guiding Principles for Safeguarding Children*** and ***Safeguarding Statement*** are **visibly displayed** in their Meeting House (ROI ONLY Appendices 10.1 and 10.2)
- **Make available the contact details** of the relevant DLP, Mandated Person, and statutory agencies within their Meeting. (Appendix 10.24)
- Produce an **annual Child Safeguarding Report** using the template (Appendix 10.19) and ensure it is submitted as appropriate to PM, MM and IYMEC.

Smaller, Recognised or Allowed Meetings and Worship Groups are advised to establish links within their Monthly Meeting to identify a Safeguarding Representative from another PM who could be approached for support and advice or to help in the event a concern is raised. These meetings are **still required to produce and return an annual Child Safeguarding Report** using the template (Appendix 10.19) as for other Meetings.

Elders and Overseers

Elders and Overseers fulfill very important roles within the Society and Friends may choose to speak with them about any concerns they may have. In the course of these conversations a disclosure of current or past child abuse and/or awareness of welfare concerns may be made. **It is imperative that Friends appointed as Elders or Overseers are aware of the contents of this policy and are clear about what to do in such instances.** In the first instance the Designated Person should be contacted for guidance.

Ireland Yearly Meeting Education Committee (IYMEC)

The members of IYMEC are appointed by Ireland Yearly Meeting.

IYMEC will **ensure that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice** as detailed in the guidance documents produced by Tusla and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland. The committee is also responsible for **reviewing and updating this policy document** every two years, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter relating to child safeguarding. IYMEC liaises with Preparative Meetings (PMs), DLPs, Safeguarding Representatives, Mandated Persons, our Youth Coordinator, Junior Yearly Meeting, Moyallon Camp and others as appropriate.

SECTION 5: Recognising, responding to and reporting child protection or welfare concerns

This section includes information on

- The different **types of child abuse** and how to **recognise** them (5.1);
- The **threshold for reporting** different types of abuse – ROI (5.1);
- How to **respond to concerns** (5.2);
- **How to respond to allegations** made against staff or volunteers (5.2);
- **Reporting** concerns (5.3);
 - The role of the **Designated Liaison Person** (5.3)
 - The **Mandated Person's** reporting obligations (5.3);
 - Reporting to An Garda Síochána and the PSNI.

Legislation and policy on child safeguarding differs in ROI and NI and in order to facilitate clear understanding the information in this section is presented as follows:

- ROI information in a **grey shaded box** and
- NI information in a **yellow shaded box**.
- Information outside a box is relevant to the full Yearly Meeting

The responsibility to report child protection or welfare concerns applies to everyone working with children or family members. The guiding principle for when a child protection report has to be made to state agencies is that the safety and wellbeing of the child takes priority over all other considerations. If a child is in immediate danger this should be directly reported to the PSNI/Gardaí.

5.1 Definitions of child abuse

Although there are separate sections for the two jurisdictions it is useful to be familiar with both.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND – Definitions of child abuse

National guidance in ROI defines four categories of abuse: **neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse**. A child/young person may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time.

An abuser or abusers may be known to the child or can equally be a stranger. An abuser can be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, you should consider it a child welfare and protection issue for both children and you should follow child protection procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser. Abuse or neglect is determined by the impact it has on the child and not the intention of the person carrying out the abuse.

You may become concerned when

- You see physical injuries such as burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes;
- You see something happen to a child that concerns you;
- A child tells you or says something that causes you to be concerned about them or another child;
- An adult tells you they are concerned for a child's safety or welfare;
- Someone tells you they have abused a child;
- You suspect something is wrong because of a child's behaviour.

Neglect

This is generally defined in terms of **an omission of care**, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally.

Child neglect is the most frequent category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. It is recognized as being the most harmful, as children are more likely to die from chronic neglect than from an instance of physical abuse.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when **neglect becomes typical of the relationship** between the child and the parent or carer.

The following are features of child neglect:

- a child persistently being left alone without adequate care and supervision;
- malnourishment, lacking food, inappropriate food or erratic feeding;
- lack of warmth / adequate clothing;
- inattention to basic hygiene;
- lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age;
- persistent failure to attend school;
- failure to thrive, i.e. child not gaining weight as a result of not only malnutrition but also due to emotional deprivation;
- failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental problems;
- a child who is exploited / overworked.

The threshold of harm for neglect, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child's needs have been neglected, are being neglected, or are at risk of being neglected to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Emotional abuse or ill-treatment

Emotional abuse is the **systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment** of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse.

Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs.

Emotional abuse is **not easy to recognise** because the effects are not easily seen. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

The following are **features of emotional abuse**:

- rejection;
- lack of comfort and love;
- lack of attachment;
- lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play);
- lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned);
- continuous lack of praise and encouragement;
- persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming the child;
- bullying;
- extreme over-protectiveness;

- inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking in bedrooms);
- family conflicts and/or violence;
- inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development.

Children who are physically and sexually abused and neglected also suffer from emotional abuse.

The threshold of harm for emotional abuse, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being ill-treated to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is when someone **deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt**. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- physical punishment;
- burns, scalds, broken bones, bruises;
- beating, slapping, hitting or kicking;
- pushing, shaking or throwing;
- pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling;
- use of excessive force in handling;
- deliberate poisoning;
- suffocation;
- fabricated/induced illness;
- female genital mutilation.

The threshold of harm for physical abuse, at which you must report to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015, is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being ill-treated to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is **used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others**. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography. Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse **most commonly happens within the family**, including older siblings and extended family members.

It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a young person may be sexual abuse even if the young person concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child;
- an invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation;
- sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal;
- sexual exploitation of a child which includes
 - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual

arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means].

- Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
 - Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
 - exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology;
 - consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person;
- Just because a child receives something that they need or desire in exchange for sexual activity does not mean they are not being abused. Making the young person think that they are in control, because they are getting something in return, is part of the abusive process.

Sexual abuse may be exhibited by **signs and symptoms** such as:

- sexual knowledge, inappropriate for the child's age, including drawing sexually explicit pictures or use of language;
- being overly affectionate in a sexual way;
- inappropriate seductive behaviour;
- sexually aggressive behaviour with others;
- uncharacteristic sexual play with peers/toys;
- self-harming behaviours including self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away and/or anorexia;
- sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating;
- appearing unhappy, isolated, and/or reluctant to go home.

If a Mandated Person knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being sexually abused, then it must be reported to Tusla.

A full list of relevant offences against the child which are considered sexual abuse, and as listed in Schedule 3 of the Children First Act 2015, is set out in Appendix 10.14.

All sexual abuse falls within the category of seriously affecting a child's health, welfare or development, therefore any concerns about sexual abuse must be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla. There is one exception, which deals with certain consensual sexual activity between teenagers.

Underage consensual sexual activity.

The **legal age of consent in RoI is 17 years for both boys and girls**. Although a sexual relationship where one or both young people is younger than 17 years of age is considered illegal, it might not be regarded as child sexual abuse.

There are **certain exemptions** from making a mandated report to Tusla concerning underage consensual sexual activity. If you are satisfied that **ALL** of the following criteria are met, you are not required to make a report to Tusla:

- The young person(s) concerned are between 15 and 17 years old;
- The age difference between them is not more than 24 months;
- There is no material difference in their maturity or capacity to consent;
- The relationship between the people engaged in the sexual activity does not involve intimidation or exploitation of either person;
- The young persons concerned state clearly that they do not want any information about the activity to be disclosed to Tusla.

However, everyone, included Mandated Persons, must **uphold the key principle that the welfare the child is paramount** and if you have any concerns, even where all of the above

criteria are met, you should consider making a report to Tusla. You are very strongly advised to adhere to the guidance provided in Appendices 10.6 and 10.15.

Best practice requires that you contact the DLP for advice. The DLP should also be informed of all reports made directly to Tusla by Members/Attendees.

NORTHERN IRELAND - Definitions of child abuse

There are five main kinds of abuse. They are caused by the behaviour of someone in a position of authority or power over a child. They can not only physically harm a child but cause him/her to feel bad and worthless. The definitions presented here are an extract from “*Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, (DoH Aug 2017)*” which provides guidance on inter-agency co-operation for safeguarding and protecting children and young people.

“Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm”.

Physical Abuse

This is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Sexual Abuse

This occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child’s peers.

Neglect

This is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child’s health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Exploitation

This is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Other areas of concern

Child abuse also includes the following areas of concern:

- Bullying. Bullying can be profoundly damaging to the victim in both the short and the longer term, emotionally, physically or both. Bullying can leave children with feelings of worthlessness and self-hatred, of isolation, anxiety and loneliness and at its worst, can result in depression or a child attempting suicide.
- Domestic violence. Domestic violence is the intentional and persistent physical or emotional abuse of a woman, or of a woman and her children in a way that causes pain, distress or injury. Violence in the family cannot be hidden from children and young people. They will often witness violence, be aware of the tense atmosphere and/or suffer as victims themselves. It can have a profoundly adverse effect on children, causing intense anxiety, fear and occasionally physical injury.
- Parental drug and alcohol abuse / Parental adult mental health concerns. Recent research has shown that children's development can be adversely affected by serious parental mental illness without appropriate or effective treatment, and by problem alcohol or drug use.
- Inappropriate Access to the internet. There is now significant evidence that paedophiles are using the internet to both draw children and young people to them and to distribute pornographic material of children.

Signs and symptoms of child abuse

You may come across signs or symptoms such as:

Physical

- Unexplained recurrent injuries, bruising or burns
- Unlikely explanations or refusal to explain injuries or marks
- Self-harming tendencies by the child
- Fear of physical contact

Sexual

- A sexual knowledge, including drawing sexually explicit pictures or use of language inappropriate for the child's age
- Being over affectionate in a sexual way
- Self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, anorexia
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Unhappy, isolated, reluctant to go home

Emotional

- Delays in physical, mental or emotional development
- Continual belittling of oneself
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain
- Neurotic behaviour

Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Inadequate clothing or constantly dirty clothes

- Constant tiredness
- Poor personal hygiene

Exploitation (the following taken from “*Not a World Away*” Barnardo’s 2011)

- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections
- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in education
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions (often new mobile phones)

Other signs or symptoms of child abuse may include:

- Frequent headaches and stomach pains
- Loss of self-worth/lack of self esteem
- Dramatic change in behaviour
- Total withdrawal from activities
- Constant wetting or soiling
- Aggression

This is not an exhaustive list.

It is important to recognize that **a variety of factors can result in these signs and symptoms** being displayed by a child - many young people can often display one or more of these behaviours without being a victim of abuse.

5.2 Responding to concerns

If anything you see or hear gives you cause for concern, it is important to know what to do and who to contact. Anyone may become aware of possible abuse or mistreatment, either directly from a child or another person. The single most important consideration is that if you have any concern or anxiety about a child you must take action. If a child is in immediate danger an emergency referral should be made to the PSNI/Gardaí.

Confidentiality

Where a concern arises about the protection and welfare of a child, information should be shared on a ‘**need to know**’ basis only. Because of the serious nature of abuse and the need to ensure children are protected from harm **undertakings regarding secrecy should not be given** and this needs to be made clear to the child / young person, parents/guardians, or adults who disclose abuse.

The Society’s procedure for responding to a child welfare/child abuse concern is in Appendix 10.6.

Responding to a child who discloses abuse

Even though you may find it difficult to hear a disclosure from a child you need to remember that the child will most likely be anxious and frightened but they have chosen to speak to you as a trusted adult. The following advice has been found to be helpful:

- Be as calm and natural as possible. **Do not panic;**
- **Listen carefully** and attentively, giving the child as much time as needed;
- Take the child seriously, **false disclosures are very rare;**
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief;
- **Do not promise to keep anything secret;**

- **Reassure** the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you;
- Any questions you ask should be supportive – they **should not be about investigating** the allegation. Do not ask leading, probing or intimate questions;
- **Assure** the child that what has happened is not their fault;
- **Do not express any opinions** about the alleged abuser. The child may possibly love the person who carried out the abuse while also hating what was done to them;
- **Check back** with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood;
- Ensure the child understands **what you will do next**;
- **Make a written, factual record** of the conversation as soon and in as much detail as possible. Try to remember the exact words / what the child actually said (Appendix 10.15).
- **Inform the Designated Liaison person as soon as absolutely possible.**

In explaining to the child/young person that **you cannot keep something a secret** there is a risk that the child will stop confiding in you; however, it is better to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the child's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest it is more likely the child will return to you.

Responding to allegations of abuse made against workers or volunteers

An allegation of abuse may relate to a person who volunteers/works with children and who has behaved in a way that is harmful to a child and contrary to the Society's Code of Good Practice for workers and volunteers (Appendix 10.10). The adult may have possibly committed a criminal offence or their behavior may suggest that they pose a risk of harm.

The priority is to protect the young person while taking account of the worker/volunteer's right to due process. The Society has a responsibility to act in accordance with our Guiding Principles and Safeguarding Statement, the rules of natural justice and any relevant employment law.

The Society's procedure for responding to allegations of abuse made against workers/volunteers is in Appendix 10.7.

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Responding to an adult who discloses abuse as a child

There are an increasing number of adults coming forward to disclose abuse that took place during their childhood. In this circumstance it is essential to establish whether there may be **current risk to any child** or young person who may be in contact with the alleged abuser. **If you are unsure about what to do or if you have any concern contact the DLP** who will follow the Society's child protection and welfare reporting procedure and report the allegation to Tusla as appropriate. The requirement to report a concern needs to be explained to the person as soon as possible in the conversation.

The Retrospective Abuse Report Form (Appendix 10.16) should be used to report disclosures of childhood abuse by adults.

5.3 Reporting concerns

The Society's **procedure** for reporting a concern of child abuse is in Appendix 10.6

Reporting your concerns to a Designated Liaison Person

Regardless of how a concern comes to your attention, it **must be reported** to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The DLP, in consultation with the person who raised the concern, will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, **the DLP will report the concern to the Tusla/HSC Trust Gateway duty social worker.**

If the DLP decides not to make a report and you remain concerned, you are still entitled to make a report to the Tusla/HSC Trust Gateway duty social worker yourself. Individuals are protected under the **Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998**, should they report independently. This policy includes a procedure for recording a concern which does not initially meet reasonable grounds for concern. The procedure identifies how this type of concern is recorded and who within the Society is to be made aware of the concern (Appendix 10.6). Concerns which do not initially meet reasonable grounds for concern **may in time reveal a pattern**, which may increase the grounds for concern at a later stage.

The responsibilities of a Designated Liaison Person

- **Receive child protection and welfare concerns** from members/attenders and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Tusla/HSC Trust Gateway exist.
- **Know how to contact the local Tusla/HSC Trust Gateway Duty Social Worker** responsible for child protection (Appendix 10.24).
- **Consult informally** with a Tusla/Gateway Duty Social Worker if necessary.
- Where appropriate, **make a formal report** of a child protection or welfare concern to Tusla on behalf of the Society, using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form (Appendix 10.6, 10.16 and 10.17)
- **Discuss with the Tusla/HSC Trust Gateway Duty Social Worker whether the child's parents/guardians are to be informed** that a report is to be submitted to Tusla/HSC Trust Gateway Duty Social Worker or An Garda Síochána/PSNI (Appendix 10.6), **unless**
 - Informing the parents/guardians is likely to endanger the child;
 - Informing the parents/guardians may place you at risk of harm from the family;
 - The family's knowledge of the report could impair a social workers' ability to carry out an assessment.
- **Record all concerns** or allegations of child abuse brought to their attention as well as any action taken or decision made not to take any further actions in response to these concerns (Appendix 10.6, 10.11 and 10.15).
- **Provide feedback** to the referrer, as appropriate.
- Maintain the **confidentiality** of the information and ensure that a secure system is in place to manage and **safely store confidential records** as per the Society's guidelines on General Data Protection Regulation.
- **Act as a liaison** with social workers and An Garda Síochána/PSNI as appropriate.

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The obligations and responsibilities of the Mandated Person

A mandated person has **two main legal obligations**:

1. **To report harm above a defined threshold to Tusla**
 - If in the course of their work the Mandated Person (i.e. the Youth Coordinator) believes, or has reasonable grounds to suspect, that a child has been harmed, is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed she or he will report the concern to Tusla as soon as possible.
 - If a child discloses that she or he has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed the Mandated Person will report the concern to Tusla as soon as possible.

- If an adult discloses that she or he has been harmed in the past and the risk of further abuse still exists she or he will report the concern to Tusla as soon as possible
- The threshold of harm can be defined as:
 - a. assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or,
 - b. any sexual abuse of the child

This covers single and multiple instances.

Best practice requires **all concerns be discussed with the appropriate DLP or with a Tusla social worker** who will be able to advise. The decision to make a mandated report or to make a report of a reasonable concern rests with the Mandated Person. The DLP should also be informed of all reports made to Tusla.

2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

If requested to assist as obliged. Further information may be requested over the phone, in a written report or during a meeting.

Disclosures of abuse from a child to the Mandated Person

A Mandated Person is not required to judge the veracity of a disclosure made by a child or adult neither is there a requirement to investigate the claims. **If the claim does not meet the threshold to be reported as a mandated concern it should be reported to Tusla as a reasonable concern** – See Section 5.1 for guidance on reporting thresholds. Regardless of personally held views **if the concern is above the threshold then Tusla must be informed** as another child may be at risk either now or in the future.

Reporting a concern to An Garda Síochána

The Criminal Justice Act (2012) requires that **any person** who has information about a serious offence against a child must report this to An Garda Síochána. Failure to report is a criminal offence. **This obligation is in addition to any obligations to contact Tusla.**

If you are concerned that a child might be in immediate danger and you are not able to contact Tusla you should contact the Gardaí.

Informing the family that a report is being made

You are not legally required to inform the family that a report is being made to Tusla. It is not necessary to inform the child's family if you think

- this will expose the child to further risk;
- it could impact on Tusla's ability to carry out a risk assessment;
- you may be putting yourself at risk.

Having said this, it is good practice to inform the family and the reasons for your decision to report the concern. Any actions in this regard should be **discussed with the Tusla Duty Social Worker** (Appendix 10.6)

Anonymity

Mandated Persons and DLPs cannot report anonymously. Tusla will respect the wishes of non-professionals who wish to remain anonymous; however, should this information be sought as part of a court case or in other very specific circumstances Tusla cannot guarantee the information will not be released.

Legal Protection

Under the Protections for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, so long as you report what you believe to be true and you do it in good faith you cannot be sued for making a false or malicious report.

NORTHERN IRELAND - Raising a Concern

The Responsibility to Refer

Adults working with children have a responsibility to refer a child to children's social services if they believe or suspect the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

In an emergency a referral should be made directly to the police.

Making a referral to children's social services

Anyone with a concern about the safety or welfare of a child/young person should contact children's social services in the relevant **HSC Trust Children's Gateway Single Point of Entry**. Referrals outside normal working hours should be made to the Regional Emergency Social Work Service (RESWS). Appendix 10.24 includes the relevant contact details.

Referrals can be made by volunteers, by the child/young person themselves, as well as family members and members of the public

Referrals can be made:

- Directly in person;
- By telephone;
- In writing

When someone makes a referral to children's social services, they should include relevant information in respect of the child/young person. Any information they have about the child/young person should be provided as a part of the referral information.

Guidance on making a referral and the UNOCINI referral form are available in Appendix 10.17

Referrals should be acknowledged in writing within five working days. If the referrer has not received an acknowledgement within five working days, they should contact children's social services again.

Advice for making a referral

Someone who makes a verbal or telephone referral to children's social services should confirm the referral in writing within 24 hours to **Gateway Single Point of Entry** (Appendix 10.24). The referrer should provide information about their concerns and any other relevant information they may have gathered prior to making the referral.

When making a referral, the parents, and if applicable the child/young person's consent should be sought before making the referral, unless this may itself place a child/young person at risk or potentially interfere with or undermine a police investigation. If an individual decides not to seek parental consent before making a referral to children's social services, the decision must be recorded with reasons, dated, signed and this confirmed in a written referral to children's social services.

Record Keeping, Information Sharing and Confidentiality

It is important that written information about the welfare or protection of a child/young person is gathered early and shared as soon as possible with the relevant DLP, and subsequently with statutory services as appropriate. **Ensure records are factual** and include details of contacts, conversations and any actions taken. Good record-keeping will ensure information is **relevant, clear and sensible** (Appendices 10.11 and 10.15).

In line with data protection requirements all records/documentation to do with child protection concerns must be **kept securely and safely and should only be used for the purpose for which they were intended**. Information should only be shared on a **need-to-know basis**.

Those working with children/young people and families need to **make it clear that secrecy cannot be maintained**. However, children/parents/guardians have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk or may put the reporter at risk

General Data Protection Regulation

Data Protection does not prevent the sharing of information for the purpose of child protection and records kept within the Society should be made available to as and when required by statutory services. In certain circumstances Tusla/a HSC Trust may share information with a DLP or Mandated Person

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It is **an offence to disclose information that has been provided to you by Tusla**. Such disclosure could result in a fine or imprisonment for up to six months or both. Individuals as well as their organisations can be held to account.

SECTION 6 Working Safely with Children and Young People

This section contains information on

- **Recruitment and appointment** of workers, leaders/volunteers;
- Provision of and access to child safeguarding **training and information**;
- Procedures for safe **management of activities**;
- **Management of workers, leaders/volunteers.**

The implementation of our Guiding Principles requires the Society to ensure that the way we engage with children and young people reflects our commitment to their safety and welfare and this remains at the centre of what we do.

Safe recruitment and selection of workers and leaders/volunteers

The procedures for appointing workers and leaders/volunteers can be found in Appendices 10.3 and 10.4.

The Society will take all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable people are appointed to work with children and young people. This includes

- Appropriate recruitment, approval and appointment processes;
- Police / Garda vetting;
- Induction;
- Supervision and support for workers;
- Support and training for leaders/volunteers.

All individuals who apply to work/volunteer with children are required to be vetted by the National Vetting Bureau process (Gardaí) or Access NI. Information received on application forms or vetting forms is treated as sensitive and confidential and the Society's commitment to GDPR applies.

Provision and access to child safeguarding training and information

The Society commits to ensuring workers and leaders/volunteers have access to suitable training and information on child safeguarding. The provision of training for our Youth Coordinator will be the responsibility of the Line Manager in discussion with the Youth Coordinator Support Group.

The provision of training and information for leaders/volunteers will be led by the Youth Coordinator supported by IYMEC.

Tusla and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs have developed an online training module which can be accessed by anyone. The training takes approximately 90 minutes to complete and covers a range of child safeguarding issues. All our leaders/volunteers will be encouraged and facilitated to complete the programme which is available at

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/>

The safe management of activities, trips and overnights away

Guidance on organising events and trips is contained in Appendix 10.12.

Activities should be organised to maximize participation, fun, learning, a sense of community and spiritual development as appropriate. This should be done in a way that minimizes the risk of harm.

All events and activities run by the Society should have a record of both the children and adults who attended (Appendix 10.23). It is also necessary to ensure that any accidents or injuries are recorded on the Accident or Incident Report Form (Appendix 10.18) which should be copied in good time to the Clerk of IYMEC.

Leaders/volunteers should also record any incidents that occur (an incident is an event of concern that does not cause any casualty) on the Accident or Incident Report Form (Appendix 10.18). Further helpful information can be found at www.leargas.ie

Use of digital/social media

It is important when working with children to ensure that the use of digital media and ICT is consensual, ethical and that it is not misused to cause harm to an individual. Appendix 10.13, produced by the SBNI, provides information on the safe use of digital media and ICT. Safeguarding Representatives are encouraged to bring this resource to the attention of parents in their Meetings.

Managing workers, leaders/volunteers

The Society's Youth Coordinator receives regular supervision and support through their line manager and the Youth Coordinator Support Group (YCSG). These structures also support the Youth Coordinator in his/her role of Mandated Person. This is important as it provides assurance to Friends that the Youth Coordinator is fully aware of and continues to act in a way that reflects our guiding principles and safe guarding policy.

One of the main aspects of the work of the Youth Coordinator is to recruit, train and provide ongoing support to our volunteer leaders. It is important that adults who give freely of their time to organise, run and help at events feel confident and supported in their roles. IYMEC will work with the Youth Coordinator to ensure this happens and to engage with volunteers to seek their views on how induction, training and support may be improved.

Code of Good Practice for workers and leaders/volunteers

The Society has developed a code of behavior for workers and leaders/volunteers (Appendix 10.10). It provides guidance which will help adults ensure their behavior is appropriate at all times and reflects Quaker values. The code seeks to limit the risk of child abuse, misinterpretation or unintentional harm occurring. The document should be displayed at events and should be made available to all leaders during their induction/initial training. Individuals applying to be leaders are asked if they are prepared to adhere to the code as part of their application process.

The code encourages leaders to address inappropriate attitudes and behaviors in other leaders. This may relate to an individual not following the code or suspected or witnessed abuse. Some **leader behaviours that may cause concern** include when a leader

- Has an unusual amount of physical contact with a child or children;
- Handles children/young people roughly or touches a child in an inappropriate way;
- Talks to a child in an inappropriate way;
- Excludes a particular child from activities;
- Disciplines a child inappropriately or punishes a child or children harshly;
- Teases, taunts, insults or makes derogatory remarks about or to a child/young person;
- Sexually harasses or uses sexual innuendo;
- Inappropriately uses social media.

Anti-bullying

Bullying is defined as '**repeated verbal, psychological or physical aggression that is conducted by an individual or group against others**'. It is intentional intimidating behavior and can include violence, damage to personal property, exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip etc. Children and young people can also be victims of non-contact or cyberbullying through various forms of social media. Bullying in any shape or form is **totally unacceptable** among Friends and this needs to be reinforced regularly through modelled behavior and reminders during organised events. The Society's Anti-bullying Policy is in Appendix 10.8.

SECTION 7 Engaging with parents and children

It is important to ensure that **parents are informed** about how the Society engages with children and young people; that they and their children know what to expect and they understand the measures put in place to keep their children safe from harm. In addition to prominently displaying our Guiding Principles and Safeguarding Statement Preparative Meetings should **create opportunities** to share safeguarding information with parents and to seek their views on how we may improve things.

Sharing information with children and young people as well as seeking their views is something that leaders are encouraged to engage in, and sessions can be organised as part of Junior Meeting, Sunday School, JYM, Moyallon Camp and other residential programmes. The Society has a long tradition of young Friends leading on and taking responsibility for planning and organising events – this **gives a voice to young members and attenders** and builds their confidence. Young people should also be encouraged to **participate and share their views in business meetings** where decisions on the running of the Society are agreed and also in meetings convened to consider the future direction of the Society.

It is important that **children feel that they can speak out** if they feel uncomfortable - building confidence in themselves as well as in the Society will enable them to do this. We should also ensure that we provide children and young people with opportunities to tell us what they need and what we might do differently, and that they believe their views are heard, valued and are of importance.

There may be times when a child, parent or leader feels they want to make a complaint or express a concern and they should always be encouraged to speak with an Elder or Overseer, a Meeting Clerk or the DLP.

SECTION 8 Implementing, monitoring and reviewing our child safeguarding policy

IYMEC has oversight of child safeguarding responsibilities within the Society and has a set of actions to ensure this policy is made available and implemented. This starts with making sure members and attenders of all ages are aware that we have a policy, and where they can find it. We also need to ensure that all adults who volunteer with children become familiar with the policy and avail of training.

Each Preparative Meeting is required to submit an **Annual Child Safeguarding Report** to IYMEC (Appendix 10.19) which includes information on how the Meeting is implementing the policy. These reports will inform policy revisions and updates.

A full review of the policy and all its Appendices will take place in 2021, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter relating to the policy.

SECTION 9 Legislation and other reference material

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

- Children First Act 2015
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (DCYA 2017)
- Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement (Tusla 2017)
- Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (Tusla 2017)
- A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns (Tusla 2017)
- Be Safe online: Ireland's Official Online Safety Hub (Government of Ireland)
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016
- The Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003

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- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
- The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008
- The Safeguarding Board Act (NI) 2011
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

The Local policy documents relating to child protection and safeguarding are:

- Co-Operating to Safeguard Children & Young People in Northern Ireland (DoH Aug 2017)
- Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care – Standards and Guidance for Safeguarding Children and Young People (November 2016)
- Area Child Protection Committees' – Regional Policy & Procedures (2005)